

NOPBNRCSE



"The Alabama Link"

May 2005

NEWSLETTER

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The Real Deal

As we all know, we are going through some difficult times within our Organization. There are those that continue to try and suppress what we are trying to accomplish. Then, there are those that ask "what's in it for me?" Some are afraid to be part of an organization that has the word "BLACK." The Organization is open to any person subscribing to the goals of the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resource Conservation Service Employees.

As we strive to make a difference in the workplace, racial stereotyping, prejudice, and hostility still operate indiscriminately, despite the actual identities and achievements of black individuals. "Our strength, as a people and as a nation has come to betray us in a crucial hour. The American ability to forget, to put things behind, to move on and start anew on a new frontier won't help now. The frontier of American infinitude is closing down, everyone is squeezed."

Downsizing and global competition have become standard in America. We live in a ruthless, dog-eat-dog, struggle for survival; racial justice might seem to be a thing of the past. One of the tragedies of racism is that we spend so much time fighting over issues of no importance; we fail to concentrate on the things needed to save everyone. "Neither blacks nor whites can be saved apart from each other, we

are bound too much historically, socially, but we can very easily all go down together." Society as a whole has paid and still pays an extraordinarily heavy cost for continuing high levels of discrimination against African Americans and Americans of color.

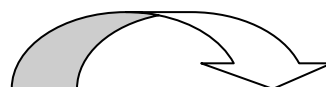
My appeal to you is that you continue toward the mark, because the ones that continue to discriminate are like people standing on the edge of an icy slope, with very little room to move, they start to slide down the slippery slope and plunge to their death.

***"God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows that he will also reap."
(Galatians 6:7)***

***Johnny Trayvick
President, Alabama Chapter NOPBNRCSE***

CHAPTER GOALS

To achieve development opportunities through networking, education and training for Black employees within NRCS and thereby enhancing community development in natural resources management.



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MEETINGS

ALABAMA CHAPTER (NOPBNRCSE) 10th Annual Meeting held in Demopolis, Alabama

The Alabama Chapter of the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees (NOPBNRCSE) held its 10th Annual Meeting at the MAJO Community Activity Center in Demopolis, Alabama on July 20-30, 2004. The theme was "*Opportunities through Technology and Outreach*". Members in attendance included Johnny Trayvick, Andrew Williams, Christopher Ford, Deloris Jones, Shirley Hall-Cole, Sebastian Thomas, Lawrence McGhee, Winford Andrews, Charles Love and Herbert Ross. Meeting organizer and host Winford Andrews organized a dynamic and very informative meeting with outstanding presenters.

Thursday afternoon activities included registration and opening ceremony activities. The group was greeted and welcomed by Chapter President Johnny Trayvick and Winford Andrews District Conservationist, Eutaw Alabama. Thursday events were concluded with a barbeque dinner and networking session at the MAJO community Center. Friday morning session began with the Organization's Business meeting for Chapter members with President Johnny Trayvick presiding.

The morning technical session had two dynamic presenters. Joe Murphy, the owner of the MAJO Community Center discussed how the MAJO center was started and the impact of community centers on rural and minority communities.



Joe Murphy, Owner – MAJO Community Center

The second presenter George Hall, former sheriff of Greene County, Alabama and owner and operator of George Hall Farms of Eutaw, Alabama discussed Alternative Value Added Crops. Mr. Hall discussed the importance of diversifying farm operations to raise a variety of crops and produce. Hall discussed the operations in making his trademark famous Hall's Homemade Syrup. Mr. Hall has state-of-the-art equipment in making syrup. He presented two

very informative videos on his farm and survival of Black farmers.



George Hall, Owner/Operator - George Hall Farms

The morning session was concluded with the ticket drawing for the Organization's Scholarship Program by Shirley Hall-Cole.

Winners were: Harvey McKay - \$50
Sierra Roberts - \$25
Anthony Hudson - \$25

Herbert Ross collected funds contributed toward the silent auctions and presented the funds to Shirley Hall-Cole chairperson of our Scholarship Committee.

The keynote luncheon speaker was Tarlee Brown, CEO Brown Design Group, Atlanta Georgia. Mr. Brown, a native of Hale County, Alabama is a Tuskegee University graduate architectural genius. At one point Mr. Brown was the only Black Architect in Atlanta, Georgia. Mr. Brown shared his core family values while growing up in Hale County, Alabama, and some of his adult life experiences. Mr. Brown shared an outline he used in his life in Pursuit of Excellence. Mr. Brown resides in Demopolis, Alabama and is currently trying to revive a 200 acre-farm that his grandfather once farmed. Alabama Chapter member Andrew Williams is assisting Mr. Brown with this revitalization project. Mr. Brown's life story was truly an inspiration to all of us in attendance.



*Tarlee Brown
CEO Brown Design Group, Atlanta, Georgia*

After closing remarks, President Johnny Trayvick thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by:
Lawrence McGhee

NOPBNRCSE TRAINING CONFERENCE

The 12th Annual Training Conference of the NOPBNRCSE was held December 13-17, 2004, in Sacramento, California. The Conference was held at the Doubletree Hotel with more than 350 registrants ready for the education and training based on the theme "*Western Diversity: Many Faces, Many Dreams, One Vision – Conservation.*" Those in attendance from Alabama were Chris Ford, Herbert Ross, and Johnny Trayvick.

Some of the classes that were offered at the Conference were: Customer Toolkit, Comprehensive Nutrient Management, Protracts, Water Quality, RUSLE 2/Soil Conditioning Index, and Soil Data Mart/Electronic Soil Survey.

Members and conference participants were introduced to the very first live auction by the Organization. Ed Thompson, a member of the Organization and a Certified Auctioneer served as the auctioneer. The event was fun, enjoyable and most of all, the committee met its financial goals for generating funds for the Organization Historically Black Colleges and Universities scholarship program.

The 13th Annual Training Conference will be held December 12-16, 2005, in Little Rock, Arkansas. The theme is "*The Golden Age: A Homecoming to the Natural State, Providing a New Beginning in Conservation.*" The site for the training conference will be the Peabody Hotel in Little Rock.

Submitted by:
Johnny Trayvick

COMMUNITY SERVICE

George Washington Carver School Renovation Project

The town of Florala is located in Covington County, Alabama. The town's name comes from its location which is on the south Alabama and north Florida line.

During the days of segregation, George Washington Carver High School was situated in the town. The school served the black children of the town. When the schools were integrated in Covington County, the state closed the school and it was abandoned. In the mid-nineties, a committee was formed to renovate and retain the school for the community. The committee struggled for several years due to a lack of financing and leadership.

Mr. James Bryd, a retired military officer and graduate of the school, became interested in the project and provided additional leadership. As a result he began to solicit funds from various sources to renovate the old school complex. The NRCS became involved in the project through its outreach efforts. Mr. Bryd was introduced to the Alabama Chapter of The National Association of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees (NOPBNRCSE). This organization contributed a \$500 grant to this project. Today the old school has been completely renovated and available for use by the community of Florala.

Submitted by:
Andrew Williams

OUTREACH

Alabama Outreach Activities

The National Resources Conservation Service in the State of Alabama is continuing the process of reaching out to the underserved groups and communities across the state working in partnership such as agencies, institutions, foundations and others to create possible improvements in the state. Listed below are highlights that further describe the NRCS outreach activities in Alabama:

- Assisted three African American groups with the application process for a conservation innovation grant that was funded in the amount of \$37,500.00. This project involved the demonstration and educational awareness of Management Intensive Grazing as it relates to Limited Resource Farmers. This project was visited by the chief of agency (Bruce Knight) on April 23, 2005.
- Coordinated an effort to travel with 12 limited Resource Farmers to South Carolina to attend a workshop where chief Bruce Knight made announcement to set aside \$500,000.00 in EQIP funds to target the increased participation of

small farmers in this program. Also, Marriott hotel chain announced that they would like to purchase farm raised products from small farmers as well.

- Working directly with a group of farmers in the west and Blackbelt section of the state forming a cooperative known as the "Star of The Blackbelt" which involves African Americans, small white, and faith based farmers, looking at the production and marketing of organic vegetable and flowers for the urban markets in the Birmingham area.
- Facilitated an effort working with the outreach partnership to encourage the development at a demonstration from Coffee County near New Brockton for March is Lower Creek Indian Tribe. This is a state recognized Indian Tribe that is interested in the production of meat goats, vegetable on plastic mulch and drip irrigation, rotational grazing and environment classroom components. This demonstration will serve as a training tool for tribal members.
- Providing leadership in the development of an exchange program involving students from the Alabama School of Fine Arts and students from the rural Blackbelt of Alabama. This outreach program is scheduled for a week in June where these students will learn how each other live and produce food from an urban and rural prosperity.

Submitted by:
Andrew Williams

MEMBERSHIP

The Alabama Chapter is extending an invitation for you to become a member of our State Chapter of the NOPBNRCSE.

Remember – membership is open to all persons.

You must be a member of the National Organization to become a member of the State Chapter. National dues are \$45 and State dues are \$35.

Membership applications are available online under the Alabama Chapter's web site or you may contact:

Phillip Slater
Chairman, Membership Committee
USDA-NRCS, Courthouse Annex
103 First Avenue, NW
P. O. Box 307
Fayette, AL 35555

THE LES HILLIARD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Scholarship Committee of the Alabama Chapter of the NOPBNRCSE is pleased to announce the 2004 "Les Hilliard" scholarship recipient.

Mr. Terrance L. Fletcher, a native of Gainesville, Alabama, and a student at Alabama A&M University was awarded \$500. Congratulations Terrance and keep up the good work.



The Les Hilliard Scholarship program is designed to provide a one-time monetary payment to a student pursuing a degree in agriculture, nature resources, and related sciences.

Donations for the Les Hilliard Scholarship are always welcomed and accepted. Anyone wishing to make a donation should contact:

Shirley Hall-Cole, Chairperson
Les Hilliard Scholarship Program
USDA-NRCS, Auburn, AL

NEWSLETTER INFO

If anyone has articles of interest you want in the next newsletter, send articles to Deloris. Next newsletter will be in September 2005.

NEWSLETTER TEAM
Deloris Jones
Winford Andrews